

Message Text

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NODIS CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SA, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD

1. SUMMARY: DURING DISCUSSION OF LEBANON WITH ME THIS EVENING, PRINCE FAHD DESCRIBED SITUATION THERE AS "VERY DANGEROUS" AND STRONGLY URGED THAT USG EVACUATE ALL AMERICANS FROM BEIRUT AND OTHER POINTS WITHOUT DELAY. AFTER HE VOLUNTEERED THAT RECOMMENDATION HE REPEATED IT TWICE. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE HAD DONE ABOUT SAUDI NATIONALS. HE INFORMED ME THAT SAUDIS COMPLETED TOTAL EVACUATION OF THEIR DIPLOMATIC STAFF, AND OTHER SAUDIS, TWO WEEKS AGO. MILITARY ATTACHES WERE ALSO REMOVED. END SUMMARY.

2. AS USUAL WHEN WE MEET, CP WISHED TO DISCUSS LEBANON INITIALLY. HIS OPENING REMARK WAS THAT SITUATION THERE COULD ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS "VERY DANGEROUS". HE DECLARED PALESTINIANS HAD MADE A MESS OF THINGS BY LINING UP WITH COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED LEBANESE MOSLEMS. LATTER HAD UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN GIVEN THEIR ORDERS BY MOSCOW TO SEIZE POWER IF POSSIBLE, AS THEIR RESISTANCE TO MANY OFFERS TO NEGOTIATE PROVED. THERE ARE PLENTY OF MOSLEMS IN LEBANON WHO HAVE NO USE FOR JUMBLATT AND HABASH, FAHD SAID, BUT THEY HAVE NOT VALID RALLYING POINT. ALL ELEMENTS, INCLUDING SYRIANS AND CHRISTIANS AS WELL AS LEFT-WING HAD MADE IRRETRIEVABLE ERRORS.

3. I EXPRESSED MY CONCERN AT THE POSSIBILITY THE SYRIANS AND OR CHRISTIANS MIGHT SOONER OR LATER BRING MILITARY

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PRESSURE TO BEAR ON PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS IN WEST BEIRUT,

WHERE MANY FOREIGNERS LIVE, INCLUDING AMERICANS. FAHD LOOKED AT ME AND SAID "I URGE YOU TO EVACUATE EVERYBODY WHILE IT CAN BE DONE. MAYBE YOU HAVE A COUPLE OF WEEKS AND IF YOUR GOVERNMENT TAKES THAT STEP WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN WITH THE PLO AND JUMBLATT. OUR RELATIONS WITH THEM ARE NOT PERFECT BUT THEY EXIST AND WE WOULD OF COURSE DO OUR BEST." IF YOU WAIT TO LONG FAHD DECLARED, YOU WILL HAVE TO USE FORCE AND YOU WILL BE CRITICIZED FOR YOUR ACTION. ONE GROUP OR ANOTHER WILL ACCUSE YOU OF INTERVENING FOR THIS OR THAT REASON. THE SOONER YOU ACT THE BETTER HE SAID. HE SAID LEBANON HAD BECOME A NO-MAN'S LAND WHERE IT WAS DANGEROUS EVEN TO SEEK OUT THOSE WITH WHOM ONE MIGHT TALK. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE WAS DOING ABOUT SAUDI NATIONALS. HE REPLIED THAT AFTER SEVERAL SLEEPLESS NIGHTS HE HAD ORDERED EVERYBODY OUT, DIPLOMATS, MILITARY ATTACHES AND ALL OTHER SAUDIS. HE USED THE PLANES CARRYING IN MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO RETURN THEM TO SAUDI ARABIA. WHAT COULD THEY DO IN LEBANON, HE ASKED, EXCEPT RISK THEIR LIVES? THERE IS NO ONE TO TALK TO OR TO SEE FOR ANY USEFUL PURPOSE. THE SAUDI GOVT ACCEPTS NO RPT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VERY FEW WHO REMAINED. ALL THOSE WHO RETURNED WILL BE COMPENSATED FOR THE LOSS OF THEIR POSSESSIONS.

4. I SAID THAT SUCH A MOVEMENT OF PERSONS MUST HAVE REQUIRED MANY AIRCRAFT, BUT I HAD SEEN NO PUBLICITY ON SUBJECT. HE REMARKED HE HAD GIVEN ORDERS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NONE AND OPERATION HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT VERY QUIETLY.

5. THE THRUST OF HIS REMARKS CONCERNING THE SITUATION THERE INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT PROBLEM REQUIRES MILITARY SOLUTION. (I HAVE PREVIOUSLY CONVEYED TO YOU SOME DEVELOPING SAUDI THOUGHT IN THAT SENSE.)

6. WHEN I INQUIRED ABOUT CURRENT SAUDI EFFORTS TO SET STAGE FOR EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT HE MERELY REMARKED "WE'RE TRYING EVERYTHING".
PORTER

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